

December 27, 2013

Greetings,

This is a second year since we moved into the current house in Nerima-ku Tokyo. Although it is only a few subway stops from our previous address, we started relations with new neighbors and communities from scratch. So far we are happy with the house, peaceful residence area and local communities.

Iris is now second grade in her elementary school. Besides her classes in the school, she has been taking swimming, piano and private English lessons once a week, respectively. She also started boy scout and its activities is once in every other week or so. These are already enough to keep her busy even weekends undoubtedly. However her parents asked Iris if she



may want to try experiencing practice of a boy's baseball team, which belongs to her elementary school. She had been kept saying "no" whenever she was asked in the past though, somehow she was in the mood to say "OK" one day. Her parents didn't miss this moment and Iris was immediately taken to

the team practice. Itaru attempted to play catch with Iris from time to time for many years, but she had never showed clear interest in playing baseball. Her parents were afraid that she would quit right away, however somehow she didn't refuse to go to the practice in following week, next-following week ... and she is still playing baseball in the team after 8 months and slowly improving her skill. Although her skill is way behind other boys in the team who have longer experience, she is still enjoying the practice. Partly because she is one of a few girls in the team and therefore she is treated with special care by coaches. She looks she doesn't feel bad about it. Iris now enjoy

playing baseball with her father which makes him so happy. Yet she is not addicted by the baseball, so Itaru is very careful not to push her too hard. Let's see how it goes.

During summer vacation, Itaru, Iris, Keiko and Itaru's niece Aoi visited Itaru's long time no see friends, John and Kate at Anchorage, Alaska. Itaru met John and



Kate in Puerto Rico in year 2001, when he was traveling after several months of exhausting experiment in his research. Itaru happen to share a ride there with them on local ground transportation and got to know each other. They are so nice couple in their honeymoon and it didn't take too long



for Itaru to start liking them through chatting over a dinner. What attracted Itaru was their family oriented way of life and well coupled to the great

nature in Alaska. Ever since it has been dream for Itaru to visit them in Alaska. After exchanging Christmas cards over a decade, Itaru finally got a chance to visit them and their son Parker in Alaska!

Throughout our stay in Alaska for a week, we had an unforgettable experience in sharing time with very nice John and Kates' family and in exploring wonderful nature there. We visited Denali National Park, camping and fishing in Kenai River. These places are absolutely beautiful and spectacular.

Itaru challenged even longer distance triathlon race this year. It is called "middle distance". It is swim 1.9km, bike 90km and run for half marathon. For racing this level of hopeless distance, one needs to keep feeding water and energies in the middle of race as much as a few thousand kcalories. Itaru managed to pass the finish line by 5.5 hours, which was much better than he assumed before the race.



Wishing your happy new year.



2-3-21 Hazawa, Nerima-ku,

Tokyo 176-0003

Japan

Itaru, Keiko, Iris

〒176-0003

東京都練馬区羽沢 2-3-21

中川格